

RUBEL FAMILY PAPERS, 1940-1942

2016.168.2

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
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Descriptive summary

Title: Rubel family papers

Dates: 1940-1942

Accession number: 2016.168.2

Creator: Rubel (Family : Steinbach am Donnersberg, Germany)

Extent: 0.5 linear feet (6 folders)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW,
Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Rubel family papers consist of letters and postcards exchanged between Ferdinand and Else Rubel originally of Steinbach am Donnersberg, Germany, who had immigrated to the United States and loved ones in Nazi-occupied Europe. The bulk of the correspondence is addressed to Ferdinand and Else Rubel in New York by friends and family members imprisoned in the Gurs, Rivesaltes, and Noé internment camps. The letters and postcards relay gratitude for letters, packages, and money transfers; describe the poverty and illness in the camps and worries about relatives selected for labor detail; and request help with emigration efforts. The papers also include a receipt for a money transfer from Else Rubel to Ida Lang.

Languages: German, English

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Rubel family papers (2016.168.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: Evelyn Umlas donated the Rubel family papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2016 and 2017. The accessions formerly cataloged as 2016.168.1 and 2017.593.1 has been incorporated into this collection.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed. See archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, September 2018

Biographical note

Ferdinand Rubel was born in a small village, Steinbach am Donnersberg in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, in 1900. His family worked as barley and grain brokers. Most of his extended Rubel family had immigrated to Chicago in the mid-19th century. Ferdinand had been involved in ad hoc anti-Nazi groups who broke up Nazi rallies. Soon after the January 1933 Nazi takeover, Ferdinand was arrested as a political prisoner and held for 6-8 weeks in Zweibrücken concentration camp. He was released after being hospitalized for ulcers. In May 1934 he married Else Jacob who lived in the nearby town of Rockenhausen. Else Jacob Rubel (1911-1977) was born in Münchweiler an der Alsenz, Germany, to Isidor (d.1933) and Frieda (née Bähr, 1884-1971) Jacob. Else had a brother, David (1909-1951), and three sisters, Gertrude (1913-2007), Irma (1915-1988), and Louise (1918-2001). The following year Else gave birth to a daughter Doris, who died at the age of 20 months after a local doctor refused to treat a Jewish child. Ferdinand and Else wanted to leave Germany but would not apply for a visa as long as Ferdinand's ill father Jacob was still alive. After he passed away, Ferdinand went to the American consulate in Stuttgart to apply for a visa for the couple and his mother, Bertha Keller Rubel. He tried repeatedly but could not get an audience. Then, one day in autumn 1938, he was visited by a non-Jewish friend, August Kaufhold, who had earlier immigrated to the United States and was visiting family in nearby Weitersweiler. As an American citizen, Kaufhold managed to gain Ferdinand entry into the consulate, where he was able to speak with the Consul to obtain a visa. Soon after, during Kristallnacht, approximately 40 Nazis from neighboring villages ransacked the Rubel home, and Ferdinand was arrested with other Jewish men from Steinbach, including his brother Berthold. The Kaufhold family again came to their aid. Once the violence subsided, Kaufhold's mother, Margaretta, at great personal risk, walked some distance through the forest to deliver a basket of food to Else and Bertha. Other neighbors came by to help clean up and to create a place for Else and Bertha to sleep. Ferdinand was held overnight to be sent to Dachau the next day, but the visas for Ferdinand, Else and Bertha had come through days earlier, so Ferdinand was released. In December 1938, the family left Germany for the United States and settled in Washington Heights. Else was pregnant before the journey, and their daughter Evelyn was born 3 1/2 months after their arrival.

Scope and content of collection

The Rubel family papers consist of letters and postcards exchanged between Ferdinand and Else Rubel originally of Steinbach am Donnersberg, Germany, who had immigrated to the United States and loved ones in Nazi-occupied Europe. The bulk of the correspondence is addressed to Ferdinand and Else Rubel in New York by friends and family members imprisoned in the Gurs, Rivesaltes, and Noé internment camps. The letters and postcards relay gratitude for letters, packages, and money transfers; describe the poverty and illness in the camps and worries about relatives selected for labor detail; and request help with emigration efforts. Correspondents include Ferdinand's cousin Robert Rubel, Else's grandfather's

sister Bertha Stuckgold, and family friend Regina Mann. The papers also include a receipt for a money transfer from Else Rubel to Ida Lang.

System of arrangement

The Rubel family papers are arranged as a single series.

Indexing terms

Rivesaltes (Concentration camp)

Gurs (Concentration camp)

Noé (Concentration camp)

Jews, German--France--Correspondence.

Concentration camp inmates--France--Gurs--Correspondence.

Concentration camp inmates--France--Rivesaltes--Correspondence.

Concentration camp inmates--France--Noé--Correspondence.

Holocaust victims.

Jewish refugees--United States--Correspondence.

Rivesaltes (France)

Gurs (France)

Noé (France)

Haute-Garonne (France)

Correspondence.

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Rubel family papers, 1940-1942

Box/Folder	
1 of 6	Lang, Ida, Ilse, Gerta, and Fritz, 1941-1942
2 of 6	Mann, Regina, 1940-1941
3 of 6	Rubel, Ferdinand and Elsa, 1941
4 of 6	Rubel, Robert, 1940-1941
5 of 6	Stückgold, Bertha, 1941
6 of 6	Money transfer receipt, 1942